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S E R M O N

Preach'd Novemb. 29. 1709.

In Whitestreet, Southwark,

Upon Occasion of a

F A S T

OBSERV'D BY

Several Congregations in and
about *London.*

By NATHANAEL HODGES.

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. Darby for S. Crouch at the Corner of
Pope's-Head Alley in Cornhill. M. DCC. X.

SEERMON

Preached March 29. 1709.

In Whitechapel, Southwark.

Upon Occasion of a

F A S T



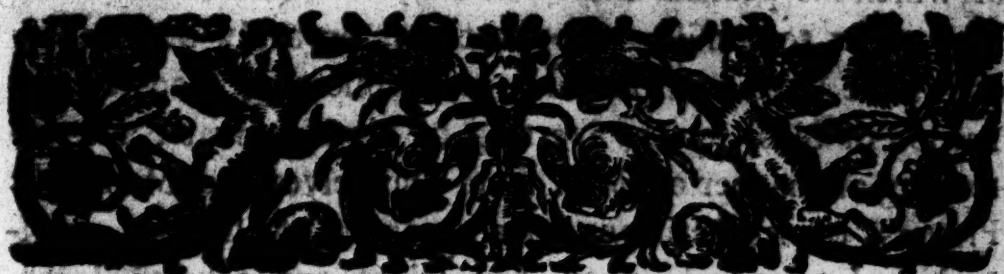
PREACHED BY

Several Congregations in and
about London.

By NATHANIEL HODGES.

L O N D O N.

Printed by J. Dods for 24 Groves at the Corner of
St. Pauls Church-yard in Cornhill. M.DCC.X.



1 TIM. II. 8.

I will therefore, that Men pray every where, lifting up holy Hands, without Wrath and Doubting.



HERE were at *Ephesus*, and indeed in most of the Christian Churches, many of the *Jews*, who either deny'd that Salvation was to be offer'd to the *Gentiles*; or if it was to be offer'd, 'twas only to those who were circumcised, (and so becoming *Jews* first.) And therefore the Apostle in this Epistle to *Timothy*, who had a special care of the Church in this City, had very good reason to press universal and unconfined Charity upon Christians, in opposition to the pernicious and uncharitable Doctrine of these Judaizers; and to exhort, as he does in the beginning of this Chapter, that first of all, Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men, for *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*: for this Extensiveness of their Prayers was good and acceptable in the sight of God their Saviour. *I exhort therefore that first of all Supplications, Prayers, &c. be made for all Men.* In which words the Apostle seems to give us the several parts

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of which the publick and social Prayers of Christian Assemblies ought to consist. Supplications, probably our deprecating the Divine Displeasure, or supplicating God for the Pardon of Sins, for the averting of his Judgments, and removing all manner of Evils from Our selves and Mankind: Prayers, earnest Petitions for all manner of Blessings, spiritual and temporal, upon our selves and others: Intercessions, or our importunate Addresses to God in a particular manner for the Good and Salvation of others: And giving of Thanks, *i. e.* celebrating the Praises of God for the various Favours he confers upon our selves and others. And these several sorts of Prayers we find from History were publickly us'd in the Christian Churches all along; and by this Rule the social Worship of Christians seems to have been directed from the beginning.

We are then to perform these several parts of publick Devotion for all Men; and as we are bound to love all Men, so we are to shew our Love by our Prayers for all Men: for if we are, according to the Rule of Christ, to love our Enemies, to be sure we are to love all Mankind; if we are to pray for our Enemies, and for those that persecute us, and bless them that curse us and despitefully use us, then certainly we are to pray for and to bless all Mankind; particularly to pray for *Kings, and for all that are in Authority,* because, *Ver 3. this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all Men to be sav'd, and come to the knowledg of the Truth. For there is one God, the Creator, the Father, the Lord, the Saviour of Men without distinction,* as he is call'd in the New Testament; *and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus.* As there is but one God, to whom we are to address our selves in Prayers and Praises for our selves and others, so there is but one Mediator, thro whose Mediation our Prayers and Praises can
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be accepted: *who gave himself a Ransom for all, to be testify'd in due time; whereunto, saith the Apostle, I am ordain'd a Preacher, &c.* Which the Apostle adds, to give force to his Exhortation in the first Verse; and therefore he repeats it in the words of our Text, to signify how earnestly he would recommend this pious Practice to the Primitive Churches: *I will therefore that Men pray, &c.*

In discoursing on these Words I shall,

First, Explain the several Terms contain'd in them.

Secondly, Consider the Duty the Apostle so earnestly recommends to us by 'em, both as to the Nature and Obligation of it in general, and as to the Directions he gives us about the due Performance of it in particular.

Thirdly, The Reasonableness of performing it according to those Directions.

I am then in the *First* place to explain these Terms, *I will therefore that Men pray, &c.* *I will*: I who am ordain'd a Preacher and an Apostle; I who speak the truth in Christ, and lye not; I who am a Teacher of the *Gentiles* in Faith and Verity; *I will*, i. e. I who have receiv'd a Commission immediately from God to preach the Gospel, and publish the Doctrines and Institutions of this last and most perfect Dispensation to the *Gentile* World, and consequently am Divinely inspir'd, exhort and give it as a Command from God, *that Men pray, &c.* The Apostle had made use of other Reasons before to press this Duty of social Prayers and Praises for all Men upon the Primitive Christians; such as these, That the Performance of it was good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 'twas acceptable to him who would have all Men indefinitely to be sav'd, and come to the knowledg of the Truth; to him who gave himself

a Ransom for all. And these are indeed Reasons sufficient to move us to make Supplications and Prayers, Intercessions and giving of Thanks to God for all Men. But to these the Apostle thought fit to add another Reason, which is founded on Apostolical Authority, and on his being Divinely inspir'd: I who am an Apostle, and am inspir'd of God, and am a Teacher of the *Gentiles* by particular Commission from Heaven, *will that Men*, i. e. that Christians, that all those who profess Belief in Christ and his Gospel, *pray*, i. e. perform this great Duty of social Worship, That Christians should solemnly assemble, and unite to make Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks to God for all Men: and this they were to do every where. The Worship which Christians were to perform was not to be confin'd to one particular place, as a great part of the *Jewish* Worship was, *viz.* to the Temple of *Jerusalem*; for there only were they to offer Sacrifices. 'Tis true, the *Jews* were oblig'd to pray to God in every place, as well as all Mankind besides; and they had Synagogues in the several parts of their Land, where they solemnly met to worship the one true and living God by Prayers and Thanksgivings: tho then they were to pray with their faces towards the Temple. But under the Gospel there is no part of the Christian Worship confin'd to one place, as more holy than another; for immediately upon the Ascent of our Blessed Saviour, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, then the hour came when the true Worshipers of God should worship the Father neither at *Jerusalem*, nor upon *Mount Gerizzim*; but they who worship'd God aright, worship'd him in Spirit and in Truth, because God is a Spirit. And in what part of the World soever there were Christian Churches or Assemblies, there Men were oblig'd to pray, to offer up their united Supplications and Thanksgivings to God in the name of Christ, without

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without any respect to one place more than to another: *I will therefore that Men pray every where, lifting up holy hands.* 'Twas the Custom of the Heathens, sometimes to wash their Hands, sometimes their whole Bodys; but generally, if not always, their Hands, before they enter'd their Temples: and 'twas thought so great a crime to come to the Gods with Hands unwash'd, that *illotis manibus libare* was a proverbial Expression to signify those who came to 'em irreverently. The Jews, we find in our Saviour's time, were so nice in observing this Ceremony of washing their Hands, that they thought it a crime not to do it before they eat, much more before they went to worship God: And hence the Jews tell us, that 'twas a Law amongst them, that every one must wash his Hands when he rises from his Bed, that he may be pure when he offers up his Prayers to God; and we read in *Exod. 40. 30, 31.* that *Moses set a Laver between the Tent of the Congregation and the Altar, and put Water there to wash withal; and Moses and Aaron and his Sons wash'd their hands and their feet thereat, when they went into the Tent of the Congregation: and when they came near to the Altar, they wash'd, as the Lord commanded Moses.* And this Washing was to signify that Mens hands should be pure from all Cruelty, and Injustice, and Uncleaness, before they could address God acceptably; and that their Hearts should be clean from all Lusts, from Pride, and Malice, and Covetousness, as the Royal Psalmist says, *Psal. 26. 6. I will wash mine hands in Innocency, and so will I compass thine Altar, O Lord.* And in *Psal. 24. 4. Who shall ascend into the Hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in his Holy Temple? i. e. who shall worship God acceptably? he that hath clean Hands and a pure Heart.* Now when the Apostle commands Christians to pray every where, lifting up holy Hands, he does not mean that the Ceremony of washing the Hands is obligatory upon us, or that God would

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would reject our Sacrifices without it: "For when this was introduc'd, as one observes, as a Preface to Prayer by some Christians, 'twas condemn'd as a vain Observation, superstitious, and rather curious and affected, than reasonable Devotion." The Apostle therefore means by this Expression, what is signify'd by *pure or clean Hands*, &c. that we be clean from all Violence and Cruelty, from all Injustice and Dishonesty; that our Hearts be pure from all Lust, Pride, Malice, and Covetousness; that we draw near to God with a pure Heart, having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our Bodies wash'd with pure Water: that *as the sprinkling of the Blood and Water under the Law sanctify'd to the purifying the Flesh*, as the Apostle expresses it, *i. e.* prepar'd Men to enter into the Service of the Tabernacle and Temple; *so the Blood of Jesus purging our Consciences from Dead-works*, we Christians are prepar'd to serve the living God. And therefore our Lord lets his Disciples know, that *those things which proceed out of the Mouth, come forth from the Heart, and they defile the Man*, Mat. 15. 18. *but to eat with unwash'd Hands, defiles not a Man.*

Again, as we are to *pray every where, lifting up holy Hands*, so we are to pray without Wrath, without Anger or Malice against our Brother, without Contention and Division; *i. e.* when we offer up our Prayers to God, we are to be in perfect Charity with all Men, and not entertain the least prejudice against our Brother, or any part of Mankind: for all Anger, and Malice, and Hatred, and carrying our Resentments a long time in our Breasts, is directly contrary to that Charity and Forgiveness, and Peaceableness of Spirit, that is absolutely necessary to the Efficacy of our Prayers.

Lastly, As we are to *pray without wrath*, so are we *without doubting*. This Word in the Original hath been observ'd by Criticks not to have this sense with which it is translated in

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this place, in any part of the New Testament besides; but always imports evil Imaginations, contentious and murmuring Thoughts. Thus in *Mat. 15. 19. Out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts*: And in *Phil. 2. 14. Do all things without Murmuring*. And therefore they think the words may be better translated thus, *Without Wrath and tumultuous Thoughts or evil Imaginations*; such Thoughts as are plainly opposite to that peaceable and sedate Disposition of Mind, which men should bring with 'em to their Devotion; such Thoughts as are apt to distract us, and render our performance of it unpleasing to God and unprofitable to our selves. But then the Word in this sense expresses no more than the former. And if the word signifies evil Thoughts in general, and if misgiving Thoughts of the Power and Willingness of God to answer our Requests, are indeed evil Thoughts, when we compass the Throne of Grace, and if Faith is frequently mention'd in the New Testament, as requisite to render our Prayers effectual, as indeed it is, then the Sense of the Apostle is well enough express'd according to our Translation, *I will that Men pray every where, without Wrath and Doubting: i. e. As they are to pray being in love with all Mankind, so they are to pray in Faith*. Having thus explain'd the words, I am,

Secondly, To consider the Duty the Apostle so earnestly recommends in them, both as to the Nature and Obligation of it in general, and as to the Directions he gives us in the Text and Context, about the due Performance of it in particular.

And in the first place, as to the Nature and Obligation of this Duty, *I will therefore that Men pray*, i. e. that they perform all the parts of Devotion they owe to God before-

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mention'd: for 'tis plain, that by this Phrase the Apostle speaks collectively, or in one word, what he before express'd by *Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks for all Men*; I will that they pray according to these several parts of Prayer for all Men. And as to the Nature of Prayer in general, it is our imploring God, that he wou'd confer such or such Blessings on us and on our Fellow-Creatures, which we know he is able and willing to bestow; and to expostulate with the Almighty on such Instances, as his Perfections, a Divine Revelation, and our own Relation to him, will furnish us withal. And this is a very sublime Act of Worship, and that by which we do the greatest honour to the true God, our Creator and Governor: for by this we acknowledg his Omniscience, that he is acquainted with all the Necessities of his Creatures, and knows all the Prayers that are put up to him throughout the whole World: By this we ascribe infinite Wisdom, that he knows what is good for us, and how to dispose of all the secret Springs of Events, so as to make them all concur for good to us: By this we ascribe infinite Goodness to him, that he is willing to do us Good beyond what we can ask or think; and that he is constantly engag'd in the true Interests of all his Creatures, according to their different natures. As to our Obligation to this great Duty, 'tis a part both of Natural and Reveal'd Religion; the Light of Nature, without a Divine Revelation, has been sufficient to instruct Men in this Duty. For the very Heathens, tho they worship'd false Gods, did yet acknowledg some Superior Being, and reckon'd that Prayer was a necessary part of their Worship, and a good means to appease the angry Deity, to obtain his Favour, to divert his Judgments, and procure his Blessing upon their Endeavours: And *Tertullian* says of 'em, that in their Minds they would invoke one Supreme Being in extremity, even

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at the same time they prostrated themselves to an Idol. And does not this tell us, that Human Nature in its most degenerate State must still bear some Impressions of this so necessary a Duty? That Worship is due to God, who created all things, and governs them according to their different Ranks and Orders, and hath in himself infinite Perfections, is founded upon the eternal and unalterable Reasons and Relations of things: and this hath been the Sense of all the civiliz'd World in all Ages. Hence *Cicero de Nat. Deor. lib. 1. Praestans Natura Deorum, &c.* "The Nature of God may justly challenge the Worship of Men, because of its superlative Excellency, Blessedness, Eternity, &c. for what ever excels, has upon that very account a Veneration due to it; and because the Nature of God is supremely excellent, there is a Veneration due to it, that is peculiar, and not to be paid to any inferior Being." So *Seneca*: "God is therefore to be worship'd, because of his excellent Majesty and incomparable Nature." And Prayer, as before, is a very great part of Worship: The Consciousness of receiving our Being from God, and of our continual Dependence upon him, obliges us, from the necessary and eternal Reasons and Relations of things, to constant Prayer. But then Reveal'd Religion, from the first dawn of it, assures us of the Obligation we are under to this Duty. We read of the Devotions of *Cain* and *Abel*, and of the Generation of *Seth*, when they assembled themselves together to call upon the Name of the Lord. The Old Testament abounds with Examples of this kind, and with Instances of the Power of Prayer with the Divine Majesty: But the Gospel contains the most frequent Precepts and Injunctions to it imaginable; it is what our great Legislator, and Lord of this Dispensation, frequently inculcates; and nothing can supersede his Command, or make us imagine that he will dispense with the Neglect of it. Besides, the Necessity of Prayer is such,

that it can't but oblige us to the frequent practice of it. All Men have need to pray, because all Men necessarily, as to their Being and all the Blessings of it, depend upon God; all our Supplies for our animal, and rational, and spiritual Life, are from Him, the Origin and Fountain of all Good: and the Indigence of our State requires our constant Addresses to His Divine Majesty. And since our Relation to God, both on his part and our own, so strongly obliges us to the diligent performance of this Duty; "Nothing can be more irregular, or contrary to Nature, than that a rational Being created after the Image of God, and conscious of God's doing every thing, that becomes the Relation of an infinitely good and bountiful Creator, should never yet on his part make any Return of those Duties that necessarily arise from such a Relation." By this part of Worship we acknowledg those Perfections which are the Support of our Being, and the Source of our Happiness; and we are bound not only in Gratitude, but in Justice, to pay our homage to him. And how insensible must that Man be of his own Being, and the Being of God, who lives in the neglect of it? How ignorant must he be of the true Interests of his immortal Soul; how thoughtless of God, what an Enemy to himself, and to Society? Besides, what Motives does not the Christian Faith make use of, to press this Duty on us, and make us diligent in the execution of it? For this assures us of the Efficacy of our Prayers, if duly perform'd: and the Spirit of God is promis'd us, to *help our Infirmities with Groanings which can't be utter'd*; i. e. he is ready to assist us in putting up those Petitions which are agreeable to his Will, to excite our Affections, and engage our Minds more intensely on 'em. These Considerations and several others press this Duty on us.

I am now, 2ly. to consider those Directions the Apostle gives us for the performance of this Duty: And we are to pray, *lifting up holy Hands, without Wrath and Doubting, for all Men.*

Men. And the Apostle may very justly be conceiv'd by these Expressions to have respect to these several things: That we are sincere in our Prayers; That we are in perfect Charity with all the World; That we perform 'em in Faith; and that they extend to all Men.

(1.) Sincerity in our Prayers is necessary to their Acceptance; *I will that Men pray, lifting up holy Hands*, pure and sincere: and that is a sincere Prayer which is directed to the Divine Majesty, with a hearty Desire of the Blessing we implore. For by addressing God for this or the other Mercy, we make a solemn Appeal to him, that we are in earnest, and that we really wish nothing more than the thing we ask. And if we beg a Blessing with our Tongues, and desire the contrary in our Hearts, can we imagine that God will hear us? No, this is to affront God to his face, and to contract the Guilt of the highest Hypocrisy. God is a Spirit, he knows our Hearts, and the inmost Recesses of our Minds; he is Judge of our Thoughts and Desires, and requires that all our Petitions proceed from our Souls: if therefore we pray for his Spirit, and Grace to convert and sanctify us, to reclaim us from the Errors and Follies of our ways, to give us Strength and Resolution to perform our Duties to God and Man according to our Capacities, and to preserve us from Sin and the like: we should examine our Hearts, whether we do in truth desire the Blessings we pray for; and if we do not, no wonder we turn again to Folly: for then we only flatter God with our Lips, and dissemble with our double Hearts. The Apostle *John* therefore tells us, 1 John 3: 21, 22. *If our Hearts condemn us not*, i. e. of Insincerity and Hypocrisy in our Prayers; *then have we Confidence towards God*; then we may with Humility and Assurance expect the Blessing we ask: *And we know whatsoever we ask*, adds the Apostle, *we receive from him, because we keep his*
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Commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight. And to this purpose says the Psalmist, Psal. 66. 16. If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, God will not hear my Prayer. And the Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord; i. e. of those that resolve to persist in their Wickedness. Let us not then think that we can impose upon God; and when we draw near to God with our Lips, be so vain as to imagine he will accept of us, whilst our Hearts are far from him. No, we must have a true Sense of our Wants; such a Sense as Men have of their necessary Food when they are hungry: for it is the longing Soul he hath promis'd to satisfy, and the thirsty Soul he will fill with Good, Psalm 107. 9. And they, and they only, are blessed, who hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled. And an instance of this we have in the Gospel in the proud Pharisee, and the humble Publican: the former pray'd not so much to be heard of God, as to be seen of Men; not so much from a real and hearty Desire of any Good, as thro' Ostentation of Piety: but the latter smote upon his breast, and cries out under the sense of his Sin and Misery, Lord be merciful to me a Sinner! And the latter went down rather justify'd than the former; i. e. his Prayer was more acceptable to God, than that of the other.

(2.) That our publick as well as private Prayers may be acceptable to God, it is indispensably necessary that at the very time we perform them, we be in perfect Charity with all the World. We can't in reason expect that our Prayers for the Pardon of Sin, the Efficacy of Grace, or any other Blessings, should come up for a Memorial before God, whilst the Offences of our Brethren remain unforgiven in our Hearts, and we deny to do them those good offices which lie in our power. Thy Prayers and thine Alms, says the Angel to Cornelius, are come up for a Memorial before God: for the

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the former will not ascend approv'd without the latter, when 'tis in our power. And our Lord says, *When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any one, that your Heavenly Father may forgive you; for if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your Trespases: Mark 11. 25, 26. And in Mat. 5. 23. If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and rememberest that thy Brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy way; first be reconcil'd to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift: for then only (as if our Saviour had added) will thy Gift be pleasing to God.* These Expressions are taken from the way of worshipping instituted by God amongst the *Jews*, from their Sacrifices and Offerings on Altars; and signify that we are not rightly dispos'd for any Act of Devotion whatsoever, unless we are intirely reconcil'd to all Mankind: We are not only indispos'd to receive the Sacrament of our Lord's Body, but to offer up our Prayers to God, either publick or private: nay, we have as much reason to neglect the latter upon any such ground, as we have to neglect the former; nor will either be acceptable to God, whilst we retain Malice, or Hatred, or Anger against any part of Mankind. And much after the same manner does the Apostle discourse, when he exhorts Christians not to let the Sun go down upon their Wrath: by which Expression he refers to the Custom of the *Jews* at their Evening-Sacrifices, which were to be offer'd just at the Sun's going down; and by it he intimates, that we are not fit to offer the Christian Sacrifices of Prayers and Thanksgivings to God, if we retain Anger in our Minds. We must not let the Sun go down upon our Resentments, or keep 'em till the time of offering up our Evening-Sacrifices. And hence the Psalmist tells us, *I will wash my Hands in Innocence* [a Hebrew Idiom, to signify his being clear of all Oppression or Injustice,

Injustice, and his perfect Reconciliation to all the World] and so, says he, *will I compass thine Altar, O Lord*; Psal. 26. 6. intimating that before he had done this, he was not prepar'd to perform any Act of Worship to God: And so the Apostle would have us lift up *holy Hands, without Wrath*, pure from all Malice, and Anger, and bitter Resentments against our Brethren.

(3.) Our Prayers that are acceptable to God must be made in Faith, a particular Faith which consists of good Hope of being heard: for in our Prayers we are to regard God as a Being infinite in Power, in Wisdom, and in Goodness; that he is both able and willing to supply all our Wants. For to what end should we address our selves to a Being, who hath neither Power, nor Wisdom, nor Inclination to help us? And because otherwise we should have little encouragement to pray, when we have no hope of Success; we are therefore to look upon God as having promis'd what we pray for, and consequently to be as ready to bestow it as we are to ask it. We must lift up our Hands to that Supreme Being who hath Power to aid us, who hath Wisdom to know what we want and how to supply us, and who hath Goodness enough to bestow all necessary Grace on us. Our Saviour therefore seems to make this a Condition of the Answer of Prayer, *Mat. 21. 22. All things whatsoever ye shall ask in Prayer, believing, ye shall receive.* And he directs 'em to put up their Petitions in his Name, as the only way to make 'em prevalent; *John 14. 14. If ye shall ask any thing in my Name, I will do it.* And in the same Discourse, Chap. 16. *Verily, verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you:* which insinuates that they were oblig'd to trust and confide in the powerful Interest of his Name. And the Apostle James comforts the Christians under their Sufferings upon these

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these Considerations, that God is very ready to give 'em Wisdom and Strength to behave themselves well under 'em, if they heartily implore that Favour: *James 1. 2, 3, 4, 5. My Brethren, count it all Joy when ye fall into divers Temptations, knowing this, that the trial of your Faith works Patience: but let Patience have its perfect Work, that ye may be perfect and intire, wanting nothing.* And since to suffer Persecution with Patience requires great Wisdom, he adds, *If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all Men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him: But then, says the Apostle, let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering.* God is as ready to give as we are to ask, but then we must take care that we distrust him not: We must *ask in Faith, nothing wavering, and in Sincerity*, i. e. not doubting but God, to whom he puts up his Petition, is able and willing to assist him. And if any Man waver or doubt, let not that Man think that he shall receive any thing from the Lord. And thus the Apostle *John* discourses: *This is the Confidence that we have in him, i. e. in Christ the Son of God, that if we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us; and if we know that he heareth us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the Petitions that we desir'd of him.* And the Apostle *James* tells us, that *the effectual, i. e. sincere fervent Prayer, of a Righteous Man, avails much: much more the united Prayers of Christians, when they perform social Worship.* Therefore says our Lord, *Mat. 18. 19. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on Earth, as touching any thing they shall ask, it shall be done for 'em of my Father who is in Heaven.* Nor are we to imagine, that these Promises extend no further than the Apostles and Primitive Christians; since the Reasons of the Efficacy of their Prayers then are not yet ceas'd, nor ever will as long as God has a Church in the world: and the Apostles give their Exhortations to Prayer, and

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Directions about it to Christians in general, together with the same Motives to the Performance of it. And therefore the Apostle several times discourages of coming to the *Throne of Grace with Boldness*, and doing it for this common end, *that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help us in our time of need*; and of *having Boldness or Freedom of entering into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, and drawing near to God with a true Heart in full Assurance of Faith*. So that Sincerity, Charity, and Faith are absolutely necessary to render our Prayers acceptable to God.

But then in the last place our Prayers must extend to all Men: This, says the Apostle, *is good and acceptable in the sight of God* (that being no doubt acceptable to God which is agreeable to his Will) *and he will have all Men* (without distinction) *to be saved, and to come to the knowledg of the Truth*. He is willing that *Gentiles* as well as *Jews* should share the Salvation of the Gospel (which, according to the very Nature and Constitution of it, was never design'd for one Nation only, as the *Mosaick Dispensation* was; but to take in the several Nations of the *Gentiles*, Mankind indefinitely; and that these should have the Knowledge of the Truth of the Gospel communicated to them) *For there is One God, and one Mediator betwixt God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a Ransom for all indefinitely*: And as the Apostle adds in the seventh Verse, *I am ordain'd a Preacher and an Apostle; I speak the Truth in Christ, I lye not; a Teacher of the Gentiles in Faith and Verity*: q. d. There are *Jews* at *Ephesus*, and in other Christian Churches, who would confine Salvation to themselves, and to those of their own Communion; but God, who is a Being of infinite Goodness, is willing that all Men, that *Gentiles* uncircumcis'd as well as *Jews*, should be saved. And there is but One God, and but One Mediator: Is he the God of
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the Jews only, and not of the Gentiles? Yea, there is one God both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*: Is Christ a Mediator of the *Jews* only, and not of the *Gentiles*? Yea, there is one Mediator both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and when he died and offer'd himself an expiatory Sacrifice, he thus laid down his Life for the one as well as for the other. And for my part, I am a Preacher and an Apostle; and I take God to witness that I speak the truth, when I say, I am a Teacher of the *Gentiles* in Faith and Verity: and for these reasons, I exhort that your Prayers be very extensive, and your Charity universal and unconfined. I am now,

Thirdly, To consider the Reasonableness of our performing this great Duty of Prayer, according to those Directions.

'Tis reasonable indeed that our Prayers should be sincere, and that our Words us'd in 'em express the genuine Sense of our Minds; because God is Judge of our Hearts, and 'tis the utmost Folly and Impudence to pretend to act the Hypocrite with him. 'Tis reasonable that he who worships a God that is Holy, just and Good, should approach such a Being free from all manner of Violence, Oppression or Injustice; or else he can't expect to have Communion with a Deity of such Perfections. 'Tis reasonable that we should compass his Throne of Grace perfectly clear of all Wrath, and unjust or causeless Anger, and all imaginable Offences against our Brother; since 'tis the greatest absurdity, to hope that God will forgive the Guilt of an implacable Mind, or be a Friend to that Man who is an irreconcilable and mortal Enemy to his Brother. If we expect from the Goodness and Mercy of God the Forgiveness of our innumerable Offences against

his Majesty, and that he would not deal with us as in strict Justice he might; have not our Fellow-Creatures an unalienable Right to our Clemency and Mercy, since to imitate God is the highest Reason?

Again, It is reasonable that our Prayers should be mix'd with Faith, since there are those Perfections in the Object of 'em that are a sufficient foundation for it; and nothing is more dishonourable to the Majesty of God, than Distrust and Diffidence of his Power, Goodness, and Mercy; whereas by our Faith we honour God, and do justice to these Perfections. Nor is it less reasonable that we should worship God with Minds free from all Distraction; for this is agreeable to that Reverence we owe to the Great God, is very necessary to the good state of our own Minds, and renders our Devotion pleasant and profitable.

In the last place, 'tis reasonable that our Prayers extend to all Men. And here let us consider the Arguments the Apostle gives to enforce this Duty: *This is good, and this is acceptable to God and our Saviour.*

(1.) *This is good*: It is good in it self, and profitable for us. It is good in it self: Universal Charity, and a Disposition to do good to all Men, have intrinsic Goodness in 'em, and recommend themselves with such Evidence, that we can't help approving 'em in our Minds at the first view of 'em. And since our ardent Prayer for all Men is a considerable Branch of Charity, it must be good in it self. Again, it is profitable to us: for such a Disposition of Mind carries its own Reward with it, and naturally affords us the most rational Pleasure and Satisfaction, and raises us to the nearest Resemblance of him who alone is absolutely Good.

(2.) *This is acceptable in the sight of God, because he will have all Men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the Truth, and there is but one God.* God design'd the Gospel for a universal

versal Revelation, and that it should, with all the Advantages of it, be offer'd to the several Nations of the *Gentiles*; as well as to the *Jews*; and in this case the Apostle says, *There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, the same God being rich unto all that call upon him*, Rom. 10. 12. And consequently it must be reasonable for us to intercede with God for the Salvation of all Men, and that he would send his saving Health to all Nations; for he is the common Parent, Creator, and Preserver of the World. And therefore the Gospel proposes to our Imitation the Love of God, as it is the most generous and extensive. God, says the Apostle, *commends his Love to us, in that while we were yet Sinners Christ died for us; and when we were Enemies, we were reconcil'd by the Death of his Son*: So free was the Love of God! for certainly no Man can deserve so ill of us, as we have of God. And if God thus loved us, says the Apostle, *we ought also in the same manner to love one another*: for this is the Inference he makes from this Argument, 1 John 4. 11. *Herein is Love*, this shews the exceeding Love of God, *not that we loved God*; no, we were Enemies to him; *but that he loved us first, and sent his Son to be a Propitiation for our Sins*. Beloved, if God so loved us, if he had such Love for us who deserv'd nothing from him, we ought also to love one another; for we are Gainers by our mutual Love. But we ought, in imitation of the Great God, to love one another so generously, as if we had no Interest of our own at all concern'd in the kind Offices we perform. Again, the Gospel proposes the Love of God to our Imitation, as it is the most extensive. God is pleas'd to express himself concern'd for the Happiness of sinful Men in the most pathetick manner: He sent his Son, his only begotten Son, into a World that lay in Wickedness, *ἐν τῇ πονηρίᾳ*, into a World which had vilely subjected it self to the Slavery of the Devil: He sent him to procure Eternal Life for those who were

were dead in Sin, and that by suffering a cruel and accursed Death. Thus God loved a World of Enemies, who hated him, and desir'd not to retain him in their knowledg: And no part of Mankind can be more Enemies to us, than those who continue in a course of Sin are to God. *He does good to all; he sends his Rain on the Just and on the Unjust, and causes his Sun to shine on the Wicked and on the Righteous:* And we are to be merciful as he is merciful, and perfect on this account as he is perfect; for we are to do good to all Men as we have Opportunity, or as we have Ability. And if it is a Perfection in God to be so intensely and diffusively good, it must be a Perfection in us. Has the Great God done so much for us, and shall we think any thing that lies in our power too great to do for one another? Has he, whose Judgment is to be prefer'd to all the World, thought Mankind so considerable, and made'em so by his Favours and Kindness unmerited; and shall we be so void of Understanding, as to treat any part of our own Nature with Pride or Contempt, or the least degree of Barbarity and Cruelty? No, we are (or else 'tis in vain to pretend to the Name of Christians) to love Mankind and one another, as God has lov'd us. And if it be reasonable to imitate God, it must be reasonable for us to have universal Charity, and to shew it by our making Supplications, Prayers, and Intercessions for all Men.

(3.) To extend our Prayers to all Men, is pleasing in the sight of our Saviour, who is the alone Mediator betwixt God and Man. For he hath shown so much Good-will to Men, as to make an Atonement with his meritorious Blood upon the Cross, and in the Sanctuary of Glory to intercede for us with God: And if he took our Nature on him on purpose to do us Good, what Love, what Good-will do we not owe to one another, to those of the same Nature with our selves? The Relation all Men have to one another, is natural and
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essential; and to abuse any part of it, is in reality to abuse a part of our selves: nor can our Obligation to love Mankind be dissolv'd, but by the Dissolution of Human Nature. And did our Lord, whilst on Earth, go up and down always doing good to the Bodys and Souls of Men, and seek all imaginable Occasions of doing it; and are not we oblig'd to all possible Benevolence to one another? Did he do good to his Enemies, and render Good for Evil, and Blessing for Cursing, and manifest so much Kindness to those who hated him? Did he make expiation by his Blood for the Sins of those that offer'd him the utmost Indignities? Did he intercede in the Value of it, and pray upon the very Cross for those who revil'd, ridicul'd him, spit on him, and put him to a barbarous and ignominious Death, the Death of common Malefactors? And shall we treat Human Nature otherwise, under the same or the like Circumstances, if any part of Mankind should be so unhappy as to put us under 'em? Should not we pray for such as he prays for, and do good to those whom he did good to; and regard all Mankind as our Neighbour, according to our Lord's direction? Ought we not to consider with how much Condescension Christ hath treated us? who (tho he was in the Form of God) took upon him the Form of a Servant, and being found in fashion as a Man, humbled himself, and became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross. And should not we imitate the Divine Pattern? Should not the same Mind be in us that was in him? And so let nothing be done thro Strife or Vain-glory, but in Lowliness of Mind, each esteeming other better than themselves; looking every man not on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. His Example lays us under peculiar Obligations to endear us one to another, and to study the things which make for Peace. His Birth was celebrated by Angels, with the glad Declarations of Peace on Earth and Good-will towards Men.

Men. His Life was one continu'd Act of Goodness, and at his Death he left Peace behind him: Our blessed Lord breath'd nothing but Peace and Reconciliation, and Love and Union; and we as his Disciples are to walk in Love, *i. e.* to make the whole Course and Tenour of our Lives favour of Love and Kindness; as Christ hath loved us, so sincerely, so freely, so intensely, and so constantly.

Again, Ought we not to consider how ready our great Mediator is to forgive our Offences against him, and to restore us to the Favour of God? *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous:* and if we have an Advocate with the Father when we sin against God, is there not all the reason in the world, that every Man should have an Advocate in his own Breast for his offending Brother? Our great High-Priest knows how to have compassion on the Ignorant, and upon them who are gone out of the way; he knows how from an intimate Sympathy to be touch'd with the Infirmities of our fallen Natures, and from hence to solicit the Supreme Rector of the World seated on a Throne of Grace in our favour: And shall we carry every little Affront to the very height? Shall we let the Sun go down, not once or twice, but many times, upon our Wrath; and retain for a long time our Resentments of very inconsiderable Injuries as lively upon our Minds, as when they were first committed? Is this to act like the blessed Jesus? Is this to receive one another as Christ receives us? What would become of us, if he treated us with that Resentment, and with that little Allowance as that with which Christians frequently treat one another? If he should break off his Communion with us as often, and upon as little occasion, as we are apt to break our Communion with our Brother? If he should deal his Favours as partially as we manage ours? Would we therefore manifest any tolerable Sense of the
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the Divine Benefits of Christ's Mediation for us, let us imitate our great Mediator, and have the same Disposition of generous and diffusive Love and Kindness, which he shews to us: For indeed they whom Christ intercedes for, have not only a natural, but a spiritual Right to our Prayers, our Love and Beneficence; and whom Christ bears upon his heart before the Mercy-Seat, we ought to bear upon ours, for he is equally related to us all: They share in his Love and Affection, in his Care and Concern as well as we; their Mediator is ours, they belong to the same Head, and partake of the same Blood of Reconciliation, of the same Intercession at the Throne of Grace. And shall we make a difference where Christ makes none? or do we think our selves better Judges of the proper Objects of our Prayers and Affections than Christ is himself?

In the *last* place, the Apostle insinuates the Reasonableness of extending our Prayers to all Men, from our Mediator's being the *Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a Ransom for all*. For when Christ came into this World, he took upon him the Nature of all Mankind. 'Tis true, he is said to have taken on him, not the Nature of Angels, but *the Seed of Abraham*: but this Expression is design'd only to specify his Family, and to signify that he descended from the Posterity of *Abraham*, and that he was of *the Seed of Abraham according to the Flesh*, as 'tis elsewhere express'd. Not but that he partook of Human Nature in general, as much as *Abraham* himself did; and he *was made in all things like unto Men, Sin only excepted*: and 'twas this common Nature which he offer'd to God a propitiatory Sacrifice for our Sins. Since then he was as Man equally related to all Mankind, how reasonable is it that our Prayers should be as extensive as this Relation? And since the Atonement made by the Sacrifice of this Nature, and his Mediation by the Merits of it, are *sufficient*

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for all that partake of this Nature ; what good ground have we to take all those into our Prayers, whose Interests these are *sufficient* to serve ? And because his Humanity fits him for a sympathetick feeling of the Miseries and Infirmities of Mankind, what reason have we to be tenderly affected with 'em ? And when our Prayers, and Supplications, and Intercessions don't effectually prevail, thro the Obstinacy and Wickedness of Men ; and all the good Offices we have done them, miss their genuine Influence thro the power of their Prejudices ; we ought, like our Saviour, not to persecute, but to pity and mourn over 'em, as he did over the perverse *Jews*. We ought to resemble him in his Tendernefs and Compassion, in his Sympathy and Affection ; and since we all partake of the same Nature, let us act towards all the parts of it with the utmost Affection, and Concern for their Good and Happiness.

I shall conclude my Discourse on this Subject with some Inferences.

1. From the Apostle's Exhortation to Christians to pray every where, we may reflect upon the Immensity of the Divine Being, and the great Vanity of worshipping any other. For if Christians are oblig'd to pray every where, in all parts of the World ; the Deity they are to supplicate must be present every where, and at all times, or else 'twould be to no purpose to apply our selves to him : but he is *present to every one of his Creatures ; and in him they all live, and move, and have their Being*. He is an immense Spirit, he searches us and knows us : *He understands our Thoughts afar off, and is acquainted with all our Ways : There is not a Word in our Tongues, but lo ! O Lord, thou knowest it altogether ;* as the Psalmist says. He is acquainted with all the Prayers of all Men in the world, and is present in all the Assemblies of his
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People throughout the Earth at one and the same time. This therefore our Lord promis'd his Disciples, that *where two or three of 'em are gather'd together in his Name, there he would be in the midst of 'em*: And as our Obligation to pray every where, supposes that God to whom we pray hath Immensity of Being and Perfection, so it shews us the great Vanity of addressing our selves to any other, for he only is Omnipotent; and 'tis in vain for Men to pray every where, to a Being who is so far from being every where, that he can't be in two places at once. Nor is this Practice a greater Vanity, than 'tis a Sin: for our praying to any other Beings, to Saints or Angels, is indeed to make 'em so many Gods; since this is to suppose 'em immense, which it is impossible for any but God to be. Prayer is an Act of Religious Worship belonging to God only; and he who directs it to any other Being, is an Idolater: and therefore we are commanded to *worship the Lord our God, and to serve him only*. Nor are we any where in Scripture directed to address our Prayers to any, but to the *One True God*; and under the Gospel, *only in the Name of Jesus Christ, the alone Mediator*: For as the Apostle by saying, *there is one God*, means that there is but one; so by saying, *there is one Mediator*, he must mean there is no other.

2. From the Nature and Obligation of Prayer, let us be persuaded to the frequent Practice of this Duty. How can we resist the Force, the Reasonableness, and Necessity of what is founded upon the Law of Nature, results from the Eternal Reason and Relations of things, and what the Gospel presses on us by Arguments so peculiar and so advantageous to the Interest of our Souls? Nay, God hath annex'd the various Blessings he hath promis'd to the Performance of this Duty. Thus after God had engag'd himself to confer a great many Favours upon his peculiar People the Jews, he tells 'em by his Prophet, *Ezek. 36. 37. Thus saith the Lord*

God, I will yet for all this be enquir'd of by the House of Israel so do it for 'em. Under the Gospel we have more glorious and spiritual Blessings promis'd to us; but Christ, who is the Lord of this Dispensation, lets us know that we must *ask* before we shall *receive*, and *seek* before we shall *find*. And is it not very reasonable it should be so? For we are not to live as if, on the one hand, we were independent on the Deity, or on the other, insensible as the Beasts which perish: Besides, Honour, Interest, and Gratitude conspire to excite us to the frequent and diligent Performance of this Duty. Is it an inconsiderable thing, for sinful Men to be admitted into such an intimate Converse with the Great Creator and Supreme Rector of the World; and to have our Prayers, thro the Intercession of our Saviour, ascend as so much Incense before him? Is it little advantage to us, to become the Temples of the Holy Ghost, and for him to reside in us by his Divine Qualities, Graces and Consolations; which so raise and perfect our Beings, and assist us to breathe forth as it were our Souls in Faith and Hope, in Dependance and Love, into the very Bosom of Jesus? Is it not our Glory and Interest to be able to resist the most shocking Temptations, and by the prevalence of our Prayers to be more than Conquerors over all the Force and Malice of the Devil? Is it not our Interest to have Relief under every kind of Trouble, to engage the Protection of the Almighty under every difficult Circumstance of Life, and to have our Souls fill'd with the Joys of the Holy Ghost? How ought Creatures in gratitude to acknowledg the supreme Dominion of their great Creator and Governor, to be sensible of their necessary Dependance upon his kind Influence, and to honour his Perfections? How ought Sinners, who have offended the Majesty of Heaven, and incur'd his terrible Displeasure, to adore his Patience
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and Long-suffering, his Mercy and Compassion; and to implore his Grace and Favour, the only Source of rational Happiness? How ought Christians in obedience to their Lord, in compliance with their own Necessities, and in honour to their great Mediator, frequently to address the Throne of Grace in his Name, and thro his Merits?

Lastly, Since our Prayers are to be so extensive, what a noble Idea must this give us of the Christian Religion; which over and above the Ties of Nature, affords us such strong Arguments and Motives for universal and unconfined Charity? How excellent, how worthy of God, who is the most diffusive Good, must such an Institution be? 'Twas certainly becoming the Dignity of our Saviour, to come down from Heaven to establish such a Scheme of Faith as this; so admirably well calculated for the general Good and Happiness of Mankind. Our blessed Lord therefore very justly makes universal Love the Character of all his Disciples. He proposes the Example of his Death to our Imitation, and bids us *love Mankind, our Enemies and our Brethren*, i. e. one another; as he loved us, to lay down our Lives for both: *John 15. 12, 13. This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you: and then it follows, Greater Love hath no Man than this, that he lay down his Life for his Friend.* And Christ did not only lay down his Life for his Friends, but died for his Enemies, that he might make 'em his Friends, by gaining 'em to the Obedience of his Laws; they being his Friends, who do whatsoever he has commanded them. And *John 13. 34. A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also so love one another.* I have loved you so as to shed my Blood for you, and I have loved my very Enemies so too; and this is the Love you are to imitate in your Love to your Brethren, and also to your Enemies. For whenever our Religion and our Lives become

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Competitors, we are to sacrifice the latter to the former: and the Providence of God hath always so order'd it, that this method hath sav'd the Lives of considerable numbers of other Christians, who must be left to carry on this Faith to Posterity; and this hath been the means of the Conversion of many Enemies to the Christian Faith. As the Disciples among the *Jews* of the several Sects were distinguish'd by some external Mark or other, so Christ would have his Disciples distinguish'd by their Love, their Humanity, their Affability, their Kindness, their unlimited Benevolence, and their Readiness to do all the good Offices imaginable to their very Enemies. And what bright Examples were the Primitive Christians of intimate Affection to one another, and of generous and diffusive Charity to Mankind! This so strongly shone throughout their whole Conversations, that it strangely won upon the Idolatrous Heathens; with whom 'twas common to cry out, *Vide ut invicem se diligunt!* See how they love one another! Nay, *Tertullian* tells us farther, That they lov'd so intimately, that the Enemies of Christianity even hated and envy'd them for their Love and their brotherly Affection: And the Great Apostate *Julian*, who us'd all the Cunning and Cruelty possible to establish Idolatry in the room of the Christian Religion, could not forbear recommending to his Heathens the Examples of the Christians in this case; and bids them * imitate the Love that Christians show to Mankind, and their pretended Sanctity of Life, as he maliciously call'd it.

'Tis true indeed, the Christian Religion does not require its Votaries to forgo the natural Rights and Properties of Mankind, or divest them of the Principle of Self-preservation, when 'tis not inconsistent with their Profession of the

* φιλανθρωπίαν ἢ πεπλασμένην σμάνοτητα κατὰ τὸν βίον, &c. Sozom. Hist. Eccles.

Faith to exert it: And as it requires us to lose our Lives whenever they come in competition with our asserting our Faith, 'tis with this sure Promise, that we shall find 'em again with a great deal of advantage. Nor did our Lord ever design to impose such an intolerable Yoke on us, as a slavish Subjection to the Arbitrary Humour of our Fellow-Creatures. 'Tis indeed the Design of Christianity to teach us all imaginable Tenderness and Compassion, Forgiveness and Love to one another, even to our Enemies; at the same time that it establishes, or rather supposes those several sorts of Civil Powers and Jurisdictions which are ordain'd of God, when they are administer'd for Good, for the Security of the natural and common Rights of rational Creatures.

Upon the whole, how unbecoming the Name of the meek and blessed Jesus, must any bitter, censorious, persecuting Spirit be? It is inconsistent with the Nature of a Christian, to form any malicious Designs against any part of Mankind; much less against our Christian Brethren. The pretence of such Men for the Interest of Religion may be very specious; but certainly these Men know not what Spirit they are of, or rather can't but know, would they examine themselves by our most Holy Faith, that they have not the Spirit of Christ. For no Institution in the world can fix more odious Characters on such a Conduct, or lay greater Restraints on it than the Christian; for it ascribes all Hatred and Malice, Envy and Backbiting, to the prevailing Power of the Devil over the Minds of Men. Let them therefore consider by what Spirit they are acted; who brand sincere Christians with the odious Names of *Schismaticks, Traitors, False Brethren, Execrable Villains, Fanaticks, and Men of Hellish Principles*: Let 'em consider how inconsistent it is with Christian Charity, to leave peaceable and good Men, under the impious Notion of *False Brethren, in the bottomless Lake, with the grand Father*

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of Falshood, the Devil and his Angels, the Company they are said
 always to keep Correspondence with. But let all who have the
 Spirit of Christ be so charitable, as to implore the Grace of
 God for the Conversion of such Men, and heartily pray they
 may by sincere Repentance be deliver'd from any danger of
 the Bottomless Lake. Nor let any that pretend Love to
 Christ be so vain, as to continue their Pretensions to it,
 whilst, like *Solomon's Madman*, they cast *Firebrands, Arrows,*
and Death, and say, *Are not we in sport?* For when they speak
fair, believe them not; for there are seven Abominations in their
Hearts: Prov. 26. 18, 25. Nor let us imagine, that any who
 persist in those Qualities which are contrary to the Spirit of
 Christ, can inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God:
 They may be permitted in the Church here, because Men
 have so many Glosses to put upon Actions; but Heaven can
 admit of no such Habits and Practices: for there only are
 recorded the Holy, Sincere and Charitable; and no Unright-
 eous Person, nor he that loves not his Brother, can enter
 into that Glorious Community.

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